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ABSTRACT

An overview is provided of the issues related to the increase of adult illiteracy in the U.S. and the research, programs, and resources that have sought to move toward a solution of this problem. First, the magnitude of the adult illiteracy issue is addressed, with focus on the small proportion of people being served by literacy programs and the costs to illiterate adults, to private and public employers, and to the nation. The section also examines the role of the community college as a major provider of literacy education, and the issues of public funding and public support for such programs. Next, the paper offers a working definition of literacy and traces the events which have marked the course of adult literacy education. Next, literature is reviewed in three areas: (1) research on the effects of literacy programs, the variance in literacy demands of differing social contexts, social structures created by illiterate adults, and systematic assessments of educational needs; (2) program materials, and teaching and learning methodologies pertaining to using mobile units for learning, performance testing, appropriate faculty skills, computer-assisted instruction, competency-based education, special services, needs of non-English speakers, and employee tutorial services; and (3) recommendations for the total reorganization of the educational system, including materials on cooperative agreements, outreach programs, brokering systems, and citizen involvement in literacy education. An extensive bibliography is included. (EJV)

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THE QUEST FOR ADULT LITERACY: ROLE OF THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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THE QUEST FOR ADULT LITERACY: ROLE OF THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

DESCRIPTION OF THE ISSUE

Current statistics indicate that adult illiteracy in the United States is alarming. Although the subject has been a focus of public attention in recent years, it is clear that an estimated 27 million adults currently function with difficulty in society. An additional 47 million adults are able to function minimally but not proficiently. Furthermore, 61 million of the non-school population who are sixteen years of age and older, have less than a high school diploma (Mark, 1985). Each year that pool increases as 850,000 more teenagers drop out of school.

The National Commission on Excellence in Education goes even further. It labels the United States as a Nation at Risk partly because three percent of all seventeen year olds and 23 million adults are functionally illiterate. Perhaps the level of literacy of adults in the nation is a matter that has sometimes been overshadowed by the nation's concerns with schooling for the young. Surveys have come and gone, but have had little impact on a country that prides itself on its educational programs, information systems, and relatively high rate of literacy. Programs to provide literacy education for adults abound.

Nonetheless, it has become increasingly clear that programs reach only a fraction of adults in need of literacy education. Of all the publicly funded programs offering instruction to adults, only two to four percent of adults ever enter these programs (Hunter and Harmon, 1979). An enormous gap exists between the number of adults who seek help and those who need it. This gap evidences important implications for current policies and programs.

The perspective is heightened when the statistics are viewed in terms of costs to the nation. Annual estimated costs for welfare and unemployment programs total six billion dollars. Since 1964, sixty-five billion dollars have been spent for on-the-job training programs for unskilled youth. The custodial bill for prisons annually is over six and one-half billion dollars, since half of the prison inmates are functionally illiterate (Department of Education, 1982).

Estimates reported by DiPerna (1982) state that 237 billion dollars in unrealized earnings are forfeited annually by adults who exist without basic skills. In 1982 alone, approximately 32 million dollars was spent by industry

for employee education. In another survey (CPR Human Resources ..., 1982) 75 percent of 2000 companies responding to the Center for Public Resources have remedial programs to teach basic skills to adults; nonetheless, employers' costs are high and a persistent crisis involving the lack of basic academic skills inculcating the country persists.

Adult illiterates are a major concern for both private and public employees. Unable to provide maximum productivity or services, they frequently suffer from a high degree of personal frustration, fear and embarrassment. Although such adults are found at all socio-economic levels, they are likely to be from the lower socio-economic level.

One of the major areas of concern in the state of Illinois as reported by the Illinois Community College Board (1985, March), pertains to serving the educationally disadvantaged learner. In response to numerous national reports such as the above calling for the reform of education, Illinois' General Assembly and Board of Higher Education have placed more stringent requirements for high school graduation and admission into baccalaureate programs, respectively. The concerns rest with the ramification of these actions on the articulation of courses with high schools and public universities and the potential need to amend policies on remedial education. Further reflected in the Board's concerns are implications for financial aid of increased numbers of adult high school graduates who may need more preparatory course work in order to be eligible for baccalaureate education. All remedial and adult basic and adult secondary education courses provided by community colleges are funded in part through credit hour grants and in part through federal and state funds provided through the Adult Education Act. The Illinois Fiscal 1986 budget request, however, seeks to increase the level of funding to provide additional services which will be needed by the educationally disadvantaged.

The issue of adult illiteracy in the nation is all pervasive. Notwithstanding its effects on the economy, employment and the public sector, it is also inter-generational. Literacy and illiteracy are cultural; values are placed on those functions from one generation to another. As the fastest growing group of adults range between the ages of 25 and 65, those below 25 are declining. Who will comprise the pool of employable workers? Do they have basic skills to be productive? No occupation lists zero literacy requirements; few have minimal requirements and those are decreasing.

Moreover, with the mounting array of technologies available, numbers of jobs will increase, and illiterate adults will not be equipped to seek those opportunities. Even if they have minimal skills, opportunities for advancement, which require high skill levels, will be severely limited.

The evolution of the comprehensive community college of today in contrast with the junior college of the early 1900's is well documented. The most recent phase of that evolution was the community-based community college. Although the idea had its roots in the community services movement, articulation and momentum for it were not achieved until the early 1970's (Harlacher and Gollattscheck, 1978).

Leaders in the development of the community-based community college were those who assumed leadership roles in the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges (AACJC). One major proponent was Edmund J. Gleazer, Jr. who served as president of the Association from 1958 to 1981. He articulated the definition, philosophy and statements of objectives for community-based education.

In February 1974, Alan Pifer, president of the Carnegie Corporation delivered the keynote address at the AACJC convention and clearly spelled out community-based education as the new thrust of the organization. He strongly stated that "...Community colleges should start thinking about themselves from now on only secondarily as a sector of higher education and regard as their primary role community leadership" (1978, p. viii).

In tracing the community-based college phase of community colleges, Myran (1978) contended that a major factor has been public education emphasis on university extension and adult and continuing education; the impact of community services fell on the community college. Providing these services without adherence to traditional academic forms, found a new clientele. Unlike traditional collegiate programs, the community-based college provided services toward the development of attitudes and competency in the home and the community.

Because the concept of community-based education describes an area of service that has no limit in terms of age, culture, prior educational attainment or intent, the scope of its offerings is solely limited by staff energies and creativity and funds that are available (Cohen and Brawer, 1982).

As the major provider for adult basic studies that focus on literacy, the community college serves as the major link for the disadvantaged adult in the

community. Adult basic education, high school completion and general education development (GED) tests are included. All are incorporated within the category of community-based education. Some elements, such as programs for the handicapped and prison inmate adults, may cut across the three other functions of community colleges (i.e. career, developmental and collegiate). Adult basic education studies are short-term and credit-based courses and examinations. Completion of these studies is designed to meet requirements for beginning employment, on-the-job promotions and/or potential entry into technical programs and colleges. A sample list of classes from one community college in Illinois is noted in the Appendix (sample publications in English and Spanish).

Funding patterns for adult basic education (ABE) vary among the states. Some states fund ABE at the same rate as career and collegiate programs. Others may fund as much monetarily, but use different formulas to calculate community college income. Currently, notwithstanding the variation, Cohen and Brawer (1984) generalize that priorities rank career and collegiate studies toward certification and degree above ABE.

It appears that one major issue currently facing society is the remaining high adult illiteracy rate. Since community colleges have assumed the responsibility for providing adult basic education, they are being funded by state, federal and local monies. Nonetheless, as Cohen and Brawer contend, any public agency will be supported as long as the public perceives its value. Each non-educative function may have debilitating long-term effects, since it diffuses the college mission. Restated, each time community colleges act as "social welfare agencies" (p. 282), they run the risk of reduced support necessary to implement their primary mission. How long will tax payers be willing to use their funds for individual benefits? Do they realize the seriousness and extent of the problem? Furthermore, federal sources of funding have been transferred to the state, and currently numerous states' sources are declining (Leech, 1985). Hence, the future of resources for adult basic education is indefinite.

Of priority are the students in literacy education; they are adult learners. Although they share common concerns, all adults can be viewed together, or do their needs differ? What are the adults' learning styles, skills, interests and aspirations? How do they learn most effectively? Should they pay different tuition rates for any program that offers no credit or transfer capability?

Are the programs, methods and materials geared to individual adults' needs? Although programs differ, are quality and continuity being maintained in these programs?

Finally, should brokering be available for adults in community-based education? If so, who should benefit, and who should pay? What about other linkages such as community partnerships? Can these be built between all segments of the community and the community college to promulgate literacy education?

Solutions to the serious problems that afflict the majority of illiterates are not simple. They are inextricably woven with class, race, and their access to power. By adulthood, those who are caught in the web of complex disadvantages suffer multiple impediments that may not be eliminated by learning to read or write. The value of literacy for them comes when they can achieve in life-influencing areas as economic security, health care, and making decisions for their families.

Similarly, mass literacy does not cure the corporate ills of society, such as unemployment, poverty, discrimination, etc. Nonetheless, when society assumes responsibility to combat these conditions and visible progress is made towards reform, numbers of individuals and groups will likely achieve higher standards and levels of literacy (Hunter and Harmon, 1979).

Based upon the above description of the issue, this paper is designed to explore adult illiteracy and the role of the community college in the quest for meeting those adults' needs. Its purpose is two-fold: 1) Using a working definition of literacy, it will trace events leading to the need for literacy education; and 2) It will provide a selected review of the literature which recommends resources and avenues for further investigation. These resources will be categorized into three areas: research, alterations in program materials and methods for teaching and learning activities, and potential reorganization of the educational system. Although this paper is not intended to be exhaustive, it is an attempt to collate recommendations which may be utilized by the community college system in moving towards a solution for adults unreached by present programs.

EVENTS LEADING TO THE NEED FOR ADULT LITERACY EDUCATION

What does the term "literacy" mean? The traditional definition has been the ability to read and write. By this standard, basic or conventional illiteracy afflicts only .5% of the total population of the United States

(DiPerna, 1982). According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Committee on the Standardization of Education Statistics, an individual is literate when one has acquired the essential knowledge and skills which enable one to engage in all activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning in one's group and community.

In 1970, the Division of Adult Education of the United States Office of Education (USOE) adopted the following as the official definition: The challenge to foster through every means the ability to read, write, and compute with the functional competence needed for meeting the requirements of adult living (Cervero, 1980). In response to previous concerns raised by many that existing methods of teaching and testing adult basic education students are inadequate, the USOE funded a research project to operationalize this definition. Entitled the Adult Performance Level (APL) Study, this project was designed to specify the competencies necessary for success in adult life and to develop devices to measure these competencies. Conducted by the University of Texas at Austin, members of the research team carried out the research project from 1971 to 1975.

The major outcome of the study was the development of the APL test comprising sixty-seven items and administered in an interview format. It was clear the USOE intended that the objectives of the test were to be identified through studies of adult life. Information collected from interviews and literature was categorized into five general area: occupational knowledge, consumer economics, health, community resources and government and law. The set of skills identified as necessary for success in life were reading, writing, computation, speaking and listening and problem-solving.

Cervero's study (1980) was conducted to measure functional competence as was used in the original APL project. The national survey data (N=1537) collected for the original project were re-analyzed to determine the concurrent and construct validity and reliability of the APL test. Findings indicated that although the test did not measure functional competence, it demonstrated a reasonably good measure of verbal writing and computational abilities.

Concern for adult literacy in the United States is not a recent phenomenon. On the contrary, it is a problem that has created continuing crises. A review of Cook's (1977) scholarly historical study reveals these recurring crises; it also reports hastily contrived solutions that were discovered and rediscovered over the years to deal with the problems. None-

theless, the problems persisted until the 1960's decade when the changing social philosophy and its effect on literacy education inculcated Americans and, particularly, educators with a new awareness: literacy education offered in isolation from economic and other social problems was relatively ineffective.

Labelled as the decade of revolution (Cook, 1977), the sixties was a period in which the federal government took an unprecedented interest in the problem of illiteracy. For the first time, concern expressed itself in the form of legislation, programs, and funds. The following identifies some of these items:

1. Manpower Development and Training Act (MDTA) of 1962 formed a partnership between the Department of Health, Education & Welfare (HEW) and the Department of Labor. Funds were appropriated to public and private agencies which designed and carried out the MDTA program. Programs were aimed at providing further schooling for unemployed adults in an effort to prepare them for vocational positions. However, since many were functionally illiterate, an amendment to the Act provided for adult basic education. It was continued through the Manpower Act of 1965.

2. Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 (EOA) provided the first direct funds from the federal government for literacy education. The definition of a functional illiterate was designated as one who had completed eight grades of school or less and who was eighteen years or older.

3. Adult Basic Education (ABE) Program resulted from Title IIB of the above 1964 act.

4. Higher Education Act of 1965 provided indirect benefits for literacy education. Title V allocated the formation of a National Teachers Corps to train people to teach in educationally deprived areas.

5. Adult Basic Educatin Act of 1966 amended the Elementary and Secondary Education Act by providing a National Advisory Committee on ABE to review the effectiveness of federally supported adult basic education programs. It recommended that ABE be extended through grade twelve and that emphasis be placed on adults in urban areas. It also recommended that increased communication of ABE programs be established to enhance uniformity and unity among program centres.

6. The Adult Education Act of 1969 amended the Act of 1966. The amendment extended opportunities for all adults with less than twelfth grade education. It equally provided funds for programs, teacher training, research and additional demonstration projects.

Adult Basic Education programs were numerous during the 1960's because of activist groups, vital legislation and available funding. Annual reports of ABE revealed increasing numbers of adults in programs, teachers produced and training institutes. The report in 1968 revealed that over 60 percent of the states provided more than the required matching funds necessary to qualify for federal aid. Those states which experienced difficulties in raising local funds were those who evidenced the greatest needs. By that time 21 experimental demonstration projects had been established in many states all over the nation. Their purpose was to test programs and concepts related to curricula and governance suitable for adult basic education.

Numerous institutional materials were similarly available and marketed. Concomitantly came new ideas in literacy education. The curriculum shifted from basic reading, writing and arithmetic to a more diverse one. Adults were given basic literacy skills along with those needed to function in modern society.

Further attempts were made to train literacy specialists. Programs were offered in university settings and teacher-training institutes. They were supported by federal grants and private foundations. Finally, attempts were made to publish professional literature, testing instruments and literacy research as new avenues to investigate the illiteracy issues (Cook, 1977).

The seventies ushered in a period of economic instability, monetary crisis and high unemployment. Although increasing numbers of adults could read and write, the numbers of those who were functionally illiterate and unable to hold a job during the same period remained a serious problem.

Passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act Amendments of 1974 provided statutory reading skill recognition. Title VII outlined a National Reading Improvement Program which expanded the National Right to Read Effort program. Of primary interest was the provision for establishing reading academies by institutions of higher learning of non-profit status. It opened the door for numerous adults with diverse needs to seek assistance for literacy education.

A second component of the Right to Read Effort was the establishment of Right to Read States. States were eligible for funding if they gave reading a high priority and were involved in basic activities to implement statewide approaches.

Variety was considered one of the key words for the seventies (Cook, 1977) in terms of materials and methods of instruction for adult literacy education. Hence, a variety of instructional materials were investigated such as computer assisted instruction (CAI), programmed instruction and instructional videotapes.

The second key word for the seventies was individualize. This ushered in the use of a diagnostic approach for each individual adult student to determine his needs and plan learning activities to meet his problem. Once again, individualized instructional program packages were developed and marketed nation-wide.

In review of the seventies, one final feature is noteworthy. This decade heralded the beginnings of numerous individual and federally approved research projects designed to promote research for the adult literacy issue. Although beginning studies focused on basic literacy skills in behavioral terms, later projects reflected viewing literacy as a broader functional concept. Encouraged by the investigations, Cook (1977) urged educators to recognize their responsibility and base their actions on the research evidenced.

TOWARD A SOLUTION

In moving toward a solution of the issue, a selected review of the literature follows. It recommends resources and avenues for futher investigation. The review will incorporate three major categories: a) research identifying recommendations for appropriate research design, for meeting diverse social structures and for global needs assessments; b) program material and teaching and learning methodologies; c) total reorganization of the educational system.

A. Research Designs

Darkenwald and Valentine (1985) contend that a dearth of follow-up studies for basic literacy education continue to persist. Their major concerns rest with the methodological issues and problem of conducting research; in other words, issues pertaining to research designs. The researchers postulate that although in theory the most desirable way to document changes over time is to

use a pre and post test or time series design, such designs are not feasible for mobile adult participants. Lack of generalizability due to low response rates and the narrow range of outcomes or changes these studies measure are the most serious flaws in their view. Others pertain to high attrition rates in ABE programs and quasi-experiments using a matched control group. Hence, the authors conducted a study which was designed to obtain valid and generalizable data on both intended and unintended outcomes of participation in adult basic skills education. In order to capture unanticipated outcomes, open-ended questionnaires were used to allow respondents to specify their own outcomes. The study integrated qualitative and quantitative methods. Subjects comprised a random sample of 400 participants from publicly funded classes in New Jersey during 1982.

Notwithstanding the original intent of the study, that of developing an appropriate research design, significant results of the participation were reported. One was providing comparative outcome data which had implications for program improvement. Perhaps even more importantly is that for most participants, benefits of ABE have little or nothing to do with employment. Their greatest benefits were in order of priority: academic improvement (reading, writing, mathematics, study skills) and enhanced self-confidence/self-esteem.

Another study emphasizing the variance in literacy demands of differing social contexts was conducted by Heisel and Larson (Winter 1984). Of particular interest to literacy research because of its high concentration of undereducated adults, the study examined the literacy behavior of 132 black older adults in a large city environment. The latter were chosen by the researchers for two reasons: 1) Research clearly shows that the highest concentration of illiterates and uneducated adults is among the older adult population, and 2) Blacks are more likely to be undereducated than any other ethnic group. They contend that eighty percent of blacks aged 65 and over have not completed ninth grade; forty percent have completed less than fifth grade, and twelve percent did not finish one year of school. They further indicated that one percent of all Blacks participate in adult education.

Using a random sampling, literacy data were gathered through a series of structured interviews for a three year period. While the educational attainment of this group was at an expected level based on national demographic data, reported literacy abilities and behavior were higher. Many respondents were raised in the rural south, and dropouts were imperative due to the

demands of their daily lives. Unlike other younger adults of comparable educational level, motivation was not an issue; they taught themselves most of what they learned. They developed the skills that were important to them in their own social milieu. The study supported the concept that literacy demands and abilities must be assessed within a given social context. It further left implications of the need for exploring innovative methods to reach these populations.

Another study conducted by Fingeret (1983) explored the social structures illiterate adults create and their relationship to ideas of dependence and independence. Using 43 adult respondents in a northeastern urban setting, in-depth unstructured interviews and participant-observation were implemented. Analyses of results indicated that illiterate adults create social networks that include readers and are characterized by mutuality. Illiterate adults contribute a range of skills to their networks and are themselves as interdependent. These networks were related to the extent with which illiterate adults are involved in the larger society. Some were successful entrepreneurs; others were local clients, more dependent on families and caretakers. Their potency was obscured by the culture and social structures of dominant adults in society. Findings indicate that educators must be involved in the social networks of illiterate adults and must recognize that development of literacy skills entails a broader concept of social change.

As identified in the aforementioned study, priorities for adult education must be prefaced by systematic assessment of the educational needs in a particular community or locale. Although the process of needs assessment is rather ill-defined, its place in education is an old and important one. Moore (1984, March) contends that the topic has been popular, but has connoted a variety of meanings. Using one state-wide assessment plan as an example, the author addresses the significance of Cross' (1980) extensive study on needs assessment for adult education. Three main points are illustrated: needs assessment should have a set of carefully delineated objectives; it should be seen as a part of a continuing planning process; and it should use the state of the art in survey methodology.

One example of using needs assessment as a continuing planning process pertains to Beachler's (1981) report involving the community College of Allegheny County (CCAC). Subsequent to developing a planning committee and its objectives, an extensive city-wide community needs assessment survey was implemented. Data were analyzed, a governing commission was comprised and a

funding proposal was submitted to the Mott Foundation which supports the concept of community education. Numerous problems and pitfalls beset the Community College in the process; bureaucratic resistance, length of time to implement the project and problem of "turf" (p. 19) were just a few. Nonetheless, some were transposed into benefits such as the cooperative agencies agreement with the College, which will be addressed in a succeeding section of this paper.

Further support for overcoming difficulties associated with the process of needs assessment is addressed by Brackhaus (1984). She contends that although the problem is complex, it is the premise for ineffective adult basic education. Educators plan programs based upon tradition, public relations appeal, intuition, faddism, political pressure, or utilization of existing resources. Major barriers, in her view, pertain to inadequate definitions of adults' needs, inappropriate or lack of training for administrators, irrelevant literature, expenses involved in funding for needs assessment, methodologies used in research surveys and political influences on which needs will be addressed.

Prince George's Community College (Largo, Maryland) has engaged in an extensive preliminary marketing analysis and assessment to assist in planning for fiscal 1987 through 1991. As presented by Clagett (1984), the report was designed to provide a comprehensive set of background information about the College's current situation, both internally and in the context of its environment. Although identified, adults with academic deficiencies are not singled out; rather they are incorporated into the Planning Assumptions developed by the College for the coming five years. Assumptions include enrollment projections, a statement of the College marketing position, projections concerning governmental funding support, the financial aid outlook and other College-wide forecasts.

An apparent duplication of the marketing plans for Prince George was presented by Leech (1985), Vice President for Academic Affairs at Triton College in River Grove, Illinois. As the sole strategy essential for institutional survival, Leech confirms the necessity for a strong sense of entrepreneurial interest and focus in the community college. (One additional item may be noteworthy for this paper; fairly new to his role at Triton College, Leech formerly served in that capacity at Prince George's Community College.)

Bhola (1981) states that formulation of a global strategy on the part of policy makers is the essential component for eradicating illiteracy among adults. Although by no means immune to political pressure, that strategy is primarily in the form of research-based activity. In the author's view, it should be supplemented with broad-based naturalistic studies and evaluation of living projects and programs. Restated, philosophic questions to determine the literate adults' feeling of humaness, independence, and self-worth following education are essential to fulfill the research needs of policy makers and planners.

Another study to determine needs of individual adults and recognize potential dropouts pertained to exploration of success in a high school completion program at a community college in a large urban setting. Conducted by Donnarumma, Cox and Beder (1980) the study explored the cognitive style of the construct field dependence-independence (FDI) and its relation to the GED test, ABE test and learner attrition. FDI refers to the use of external cues or internal cues as primary guides in information processing. Of the forty respondents, those who passed the GED test were found to be significantly more field independent; those who failed or dropped the program were much more field dependent. Results suggested that the education experience is difficult and frustrating for adults who are field dependent. Hence, field dependent learners tend to be "attrition statistics" (p. 23) rather than successful completers of the instructional program. Notwithstanding the small sample size and need for replication on a larger scale, the researchers concluded that more attention should be given to learners' FDI when assessing learning needs and recommending instruction.

B. Materials and Methodologies

In progressing toward a solution, forthcoming resources for disadvantaged adults will pertain to program materials and methods for teaching and learning activities. The first reports a case study of the design and implementation of an innovative instructional linkage with adults who had dropped out of traditional education. Based upon previous surveys conducted by the sponsoring community college in the southeastern state, results indicated that many adults could not attend the skills programs due to transportation problems, conflicting working hours or social and economic problems. In order to overcome these concerns, the college developed a long-range plan to reach out to these adult citizens. The resulting plan used mobile classroom units

(vans) to provide basic skills education for adults at various sites in the community. Sites serviced were hospitals, correctional facilities, community centers, local churches and local businesses. Instruction via modules was self-paced, individualized, and mastery-oriented. At the completion of each module the ABE test was administered to demonstrate accomplishment of learning.

The decision-making process involved a detailed analysis of all elements necessary for successful instructional delivery. Marketed to motivate potential participants, the plan interfaced with three external mechanisms: the site, the unserved adult learner, and the portable van equipped with education materials and instructional personnel. This proved to be successful in the nontraditional delivery of critical services to the underserved adult.

Since the United States Office of Education (USOE) funded the APL study to determine if it could be used as a more effective measure of assessing adult basic education (ABE) than the GED test which shapes most of the funded ABE programs, implementation provided impetus for another study. Conducted by Cervero (1981), the research measured how outcomes in ABE exemplified by APL performance test differed from the most widely used approach exemplified by the GED test. The assumption was that measurements made on APL differ from GED because the former measures life coping skills and the latter measures academic skills. Using 269 adults as respondents, a high positive correlation was found between total scores on the APL survey and the GED test. Furthermore, factor analyses of scores in the two tests suggested that one mental trait, reading ability, significantly affects performance on both tests.

Although no evidence points to the notion that adults would be more motivated to enroll in and complete a new APL instructional program, it need not be viewed as untenable. Much of the literature suggests the APL approach is more appropriate for adults due to its stress on skills and knowledge adults need for activities of daily living. And, since ABE faculty often state they present skills in GED preparation classes with materials with which adults are familiar, the same may apply to use of the APL approach.

Teachers of adult basic education are a vital component of the learning process. Teachers must possess certain characteristics and qualifications if they are to be effective. Ulmer (1980) states that in reaching across social class lives, teachers have to offer learners reinforcement of their desire to learn, understanding of their personal problems, appreciation of cultural differences, encouragement towards self-confidence and self-esteem and pro-

ficiency in educational content. With this foundation and an open channel for communication with participants, the teacher can then select the best instructional procedures for individual adults.

Another technique currently being used in some of the ABE and GED classrooms of community colleges is computer-assisted instruction (CAI). As described by Rachal (1984) the computer is demonstrating some positive benefits. Rachal examines a number of data-based programs which have used CAI in a specific area of adult basic education. Consideration for use is warranted by its merits of providing individualization, positive reinforcement, and instructional gains. Potential problem areas are cited as cost factors, the "hardware syndrome" (p. 92), and requirements of administrative and staff commitment.

Related to the above tool is a movement entitled, competency-based education (CBE). A process which has engendered much widespread attention in recent years, CBE has been described as a significant reform by some and a preconceived fad by others. Societal pressure for a minimal competency in basic skills became the underpinnings for the development of CBE. Many aspects of ABE and GED testing practices are similar to CBE (Heyenga and Isaacson, 1980). What distinguishes CBE from traditional adult education practice is the focus of CBE on educational outcomes. Achievement is compared to pre-stated objectives. All educational processes are focused toward outcomes; hence, the process becomes a means of achieving an end, rather than an end in itself.

Proponents of CBE contend that it is the most workable approach to providing both the equality of access and outcome which many groups, such as disadvantaged adults, need.

According to the authors, some problems related to CBE in community colleges remain unresolved. These pertain to a lack of technical skills in competence articulation and measurement, and problems due to organizational processes and change. Governing organizations and funding agencies, the authors contend, have been slow to acknowledge the "complexity and scope of the problems which higher education is having in its relationship with 'new clientele'" (p. 44). While it is possible for CBE to make a significant contribution to community education, it can give the "illusion of reform" (p. 46) without seriously attacking the problems it has been designed to address. Careful attention, it seems, must be given to assessment and integration of programs if such pitfalls are to be avoided.

Belz (1984) similarly presents alternative intervention strategies which may be used in teaching functionally illiterate adults in the community. She describes the process of educational therapy in a sequence of phases that the client may move in and out of as learning develops and new insights emerge. These are identified as: full-scale explorative evaluation and interview, experimental learning units, analysis and reflection, and finally, resolution or working through by reaffirming the sense of the adult's new self-awareness in consonance with his current ability and performance. Although the process in educational therapy is long and arduous, Belz is confident that through struggle, progress and growth emerge.

In describing special roles with adult students in the community college, Moore (1983) refutes using the term, "special" (p. 29). Labelling them is somehow inconsistent with the fundamental ethos of the community college -- that of an open door to all adults within the community. He contends that spending an inordinate amount of time linking academic skill deficiencies in adults to self-worth, cultural factors, race, economics, family dysfunction, past performance, etc., is not a useful exercise. It may be used to predict fortune. Rather, special services should be provided to adult students.

Moore believes that the first responsibility of the institution's services is to establish academic education as the central focus -- even basic skills should be labelled "academic" (p. 37). They must be taught intellectual toughness i.e., setting standards and being consistent in their application. Another responsibility in serving adult students is for providing counselors who will assume a student advocacy role and will effect change or help students effect change in themselves.

Moore purports that the golden age of "talk cures" (p. 45) for personal problems and legislative funding for new innovative approaches and educational experiments is past. It's time that these special services, helping students learn to read, write, and think and become intellectually and emotionally tough and self-sufficient, serve as catalysts rather than crutches for adult education.

Kleinmann considers circumstances surrounding the involuntary migration of Indochinese adult refugees requiring additional special services. Newly arrived, undereducated, non-English speaking refugees are not equipped to find housing, employment, or social interactive opportunities. An effective support service system is essential. Furthermore, in the classroom Kleinmann

urges the use of the monitor model as opposed to the traditional English or a second language (ESL) learning. This model is a theory of adult second language development which emphasizes communication interaction rather than formal instruction. It results in ESL adults receiving large doses of locused target language input, which enables them to formulate and test hypotheses about the target language and acquire competence.

Cohen (1984) addressed the special needs of the Hispanic adult students in community colleges at a recent presentation. Questions pertaining to the progress of this group were placed in the context of those in other levels of the college system. Data was provided reflecting the overall de-emphasis of transfer function of Hispanics relative to total population within their respective state. Cohen refuted data which singled out the community colleges as doing Hispanics a disservice. He contends these colleges have made it possible for Hispanics to matriculate in larger numbers. He used states which had well-developed community college systems with strong support services and active student involvement as examples of Hispanic progress and potential eligibility for transfer.

Another resource, as a technique for enhancing adult literacy, reflects the annual report of CUNY Technical College of 1983-1984. Marked by extensive cooperation of the Divisions of the College with Continuing Education, the report summarized major achievements in the commitment to adults, especially in the areas of expanded literacy and learning programs, new funding program for job training (entitled Project Stride) and placement, expanding options for women, educational opportunities to inmates in the New York City Department of Corrections, the Job Training Partnership Act Basic Skills Program, and the City University of New York's General Education Development (GED) Program.

One final diverse approach improved the reading competence of the City Housing Authority personnel in a medium size city of a southeastern state. Recognizing that employees' limitations were based upon a lack of reading skills, the Authority embarked on an improvement program by seeking the advice of the local community college and the author (Kapel, 1984). Subsequent to a contractual agreement, Kapel implemented ten-week tutorial sessions focusing on reading achievement of the employees. A variety of materials and methods were prepared to enhance the adults' learning-gain scores in vocabulary and comprehension plus high levels of attendance were indicators of the program's

success. Furthermore, employees began to notice improved speed and accuracy of written materials and revitalized confidence and skill in reading. It proved to be a noteworthy program which could become an integral part of the world of work.

C. The Educational System

Potential reorganization of the educational system is the third category of recommended resources. Numerous authors surveyed support this major change. The Ford Foundation Study (1979) led by Hunter and Harmon, was an extensive two-year study of illiteracy in the United States. Its final conclusion proposed a major shift in national educational policy concomitant with eleven specific recommendations.

The principal overall recommendation flowing from the conclusion of the Study was briefly stated as: "...the establishment of new, pluralistic, community based initiatives whose specific objective will be to serve the most disadvantaged hard-core poor, the bulk of whom never enroll in any existing program" (pp. 104-105).

In brief, the following will summarize the recommendations made by the Study:

1. Community-based approaches should be given wide dissemination through distribution of the Study to legislators, policy-makers, government officials, corporations, educators, etc. concerned with community development.

2. A series of well-publicized regional conferences should be planned to gather data and implement the central proposal.

3. Participants in the above conferences should develop in their own geographic area increased public awareness, involving other educators, data of on-going community-based programs, etc.

4. More systematic and accurate data-base about groups and communities of disadvantaged adults.

5. Consultation for needed research.

6. As information from Number 4. becomes available, begin case studies for present added information (e.g. models of financing, mechanisms for integrated local planning, lists of competencies).

7. Educational agencies and organizations should be funded to establish pilot projects to test hypothesis of Study.

8. Create national commission on community-based initiators.

9. Study alternative proposals.

10. Involve citizens in addressing social questions.

11. Develop instruments for social planning.

By offering a totally new perspective, this Study provided the impetus and challenge to deal with the phenomenon of adult illiteracy. The community-based philosophy of the community college is a likely source to implement the Study's concluding recommendations. It has a number of incentives for cooperating with agencies. One is its strong tradition of community service which was derived mainly from its local funding base. Further, its geographic dispersion and diversified powers of revenue have provided a significant price advantage in the recruitment of students. Concomitant with its tradition of open access, these factors have encouraged the community college to develop new programs to serve the disadvantaged adults.

A few examples previously identified in this paper indicated the success of cooperative community-based agencies with the community college. Another reported by Green and Bell (1985) pertains to the extensive community-based program for the 6000 adults in ABE, GED, and ESL at Triton College. The literacy program recruits, trains, and matches the adults with job positions. A new brokering course for adult high school completion to be implemented in the fall of 1985 is an additional program feature. And, the outreach program geared to the Hispanic population within the district has established a Hispanic Center in the community to provide basic skill needs. All programs are short-term, but the emphasis is to mainstream them into business and industry within the district if at all possible. All funding for these programs is provided by the state and federal governements. Adult students pay a nominal activity fee for enrollment. The reports view the programs and strong administrative support as unique. They indicated that these programs enjoy top priority at Triton. When questioned regarding their sense of issues concerning the programs, they indicated one: the program will need more statewide funding.

Educational brokering is a system or structure of providing advisement, information, referral and advocacy. Through this model, student services can be adopted for nontraditional students. It is the process of assisting people in their attempts to define their educational goals and then "connecting" (Mills, 1978, p. 37) them with necessary resources to accomplish their goals.

In practice, it is larger than any single institution; it involves the entire community as a resource/source. As reported by Green, Triton is the only community college in Illinois that will establish a brokering service for the high school completion program in the fall.

Funding sources are available for brokering centers. Although participants as users may be charged a fee, federal monies are available (e.g. Educational Opportunity Center, Title I, Title III, Title IV, CETA, and the Fund for Improvement of Postsecondary Education). Community sources, state employment services, welfare departments are additional potential sources (Mills, 1978). Green indicated that primary revenues for the service at Triton will be derived from the state.

Another example reported by Gold (1982) was an interdisciplinary training program that was developed by Bay de Noc Community College in Michigan to meet untraditional adults' needs. Through contracts between the College and local business, students developed on-the-job training while enrolled in basic skill classes on campus. Although the program served a wide spectrum of individuals, it provided those adults who may not have finished high school opportunities to learn saleable skills in the job market.

In support of the community development concept, Hokanson (1980) admonished the community college to take responsibility for attacking social problems within the community. He contends that if the college would think of itself as part of its community, instead of an institution providing service to it, the college would have the process of community development. By reaching all disadvantaged citizens in their community and teaching them basic social skills, they in turn will become involved, and continue community development.

Another example of community involvement was reported by Moore (1981). Use of advisory councils legislated under the Adult Education Act was left up to the discretion of the states under the 1978 amendment. It designated that each state receiving funds under the authority of the Act was to establish Participatory Planning Councils (PPC). These were to be represented by individuals from institutionalized adults, limited English-speaking ability and areas of high unemployment. The state of Virginia's PPC plan was developed. Members were chosen, a program was developed, orientation to the program was implemented, and a network of information regarding adults' needs was disseminated. This resulted in increased knowledge and subsequent enrollment in

adult basic education (ABE) classes as well as many other areas where the PPC process was used. Hence, ABE classes were initiated in additional community facilities as a direct result of involvement of such members in the community.

Lieberman's (1981) presentation depicted one final example of impact that the community college may have upon its underserved residents. As a new delivery approach, the author exemplified the changing role of education to the citizens of Queens, New York. Pursuant to a comprehensive plan, she developed traveling programs with learning packages for each program. Only one program was used at a time; exhibits were extracted from the program and placed in every public space in the community for citizens to view. A two-hour seminar was scheduled to expand the theme of the exhibit. Each theme related to individuals' needs -- transportation, housing, leisure, family and work. It reached citizens in the community, and it sensitized the professionals to the need for secondary education into the lives of people and into the organization of society.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This paper described the current issue of increasing adult illiteracy in the United States. Although the subject has been a focus of attention in recent years, the issue persists. Between basic and functional illiteracy, the latter predominates. Programs geared to literacy education are reaching only a fraction of the adults in need. The perspective is heightened when statistics are viewed in terms of costs to the nation. Unrealized earnings are forfeited by adults who exist without basic functional skills for activities of daily living. Costs to private and public employers are also a major concern. The issue impacts upon generations, culture and values. It is all pervasive.

Because the concept of the community college involves community-based education, it is the major provider for studies that focus on literacy. It is currently being funded by state, federal and local monies. Nonetheless, the future of funding resources is uncertain, and the public's view of literacy needs is indefinite. Reaching adults in need of literacy education remains a priority issue.

The basic purpose of the paper was two-fold: 1) Using a working definition of literacy, it traced the issues in terms of events leading to the need for literacy education; and 2) It provided a selected review of the literature

which recommends resources and avenues for further investigation. These were categorized into three areas. The first was research which identified recommendations for appropriate research designs, for meeting diverse social structures and for global needs assessments. The second area focused on program materials and teaching and learning methodologies. These pertained to using mobile units for learning, performance testing, appropriate faculty skills, computer-assisted instruction (CAI), competency-based education (CBE), special services, special needs of non-English speaking adults, expanding programs and employee tutorial sessions.

The third and final category was the recommendation of total reorganization of the educational system. Implicit in this were concepts of cooperative agreements, outreach programs, brokering systems and adult citizens' involvement in literacy education.

As indicated above the issue is complex, comprehensive and longstanding. No easy, absolute formula exists. Nonetheless, opportunity is implicit in conditions of adversity and change. New vistas can be opened when changes are made. Further, it is clear that if the community college is to maintain its mission to the community it serves, the quest for adult literacy must remain one of its major priorities. Moreover, it seems clear that a major strategy for involving all citizens in the community to better understand illiteracy and develop means to eliminate it must be established. This focus on individuals in the community includes legislators, educators, labor leaders, health service personnel, foundations and corporations, and community practitioners. It should form a broader knowledge base, a plan and subsequent action.

Alfred (1982) contends that the value of community college impact is a reciprocal process; it is both a producer and receptor. In the quest for literacy the community college can ill afford to function in isolation from the social, political economic base provided by its constituency. It must continue to reach out and assume its rightful place as <u>the</u> community.

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